412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, [354] from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-[407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
415 ket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pin-head-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akär-ma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shep-herding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by moroeco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("mu-day") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, en-
●[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf")
411 of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A peble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end released at just the right speed and direction. It can
[24] stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
412 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

291 [613] in this kutta, resembling a motionless sack, stirring only when the rays of the sun begin to warm.

The "nätäla" is more loosely woven and about half the size of a "kutta". Because it was quickly made, used little cotton, and was therefore much cheaper, it was the dress of the poor and consequently despised. But in very recent times it has been finely made, some even in a factory in Dire Dawa city, and it is now finely embroidered near the border where the dyed strip used to be.

291 531 "Jano" or "jano kuta", as the name indicates, was the fine shamma of royalty, in chich case warmth was no consideration, and border embroidery was of purple, green gold and other colored silken thread, in various designs. "Tebäb" or "derb jano" was embroidered with arabesques, and nowadays has often been changed to diamonds in the national colors of Ethiopia; green, yellow, red. Now urban women wear it, and it is becoming festive dress even for peasant women.

291 The roughest, coarsest and most durable workaday shamma of the peasant has no border ("goda"). Sometimes the "kämis" of the peasant woman is made of this tightly woven material. In the old times it had a very broad red border (a foot wide) and since it was worn by the freehold farmer, it was a garment of honor among the peasantry, even in the time of Menelik II. Now it has lost prestige, except among the more remote rural landholding kin, and it is not produced any more.

The "burnos" hooded cape of wool, is an ancient garment worn by Amhara feudal lords and royalty, both men

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under
[291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dabälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in.
[212] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("berana") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a fed, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.
[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for
[534] use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mäḥabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mäḥabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with incised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

[531] [554]

The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and redrape their shammas in the symbol

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïzä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 130 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 [566] Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such [282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.